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ABSTRACT

Prepared as part of a series applying recent research in oral and written communication instruction to classroom practice, this booklet provides a framework for successful inservice education in communication skills. The first section addresses the question of why teachers need inservice in oral and written communication by pointing to the lack of extensive writing in the schools, the lack of instruction in writing in most English education curricula, and the growing demand for increased instruction in the communication skills. The second section looks at the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that should be covered in an inservice program. The third section explains how to develop effective inservice programs and provides suggestions for assessing teacher needs, making both long and short range plans, and dealing with teacher differences. The fourth section discusses the roles and responsibilities of principals, teachers, and inservice leaders, while the fifth reviews steps in planning and implementing an effective program. The section also includes a sample 5-year inservice training guide. The final section examines ways to determine the success of a program. (FL.)

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Inservice to Improve Speaking and Writing in Grades K-12

By Betty Jefferson Blaisdell

The Talking and Writing Series, K-12: Successful Classroom Practices

ED233382

The purpose of this series is to provide information to assist teachers and curriculum planners at all grade levels in improving communication skills across the major disciplines.

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PREFACE

During the past decade, teachers, education administrators and researchers, and the general public have become increasingly concerned about students' ability to communicate. This broad public concern for improvement in education led to the enactment of Title II, Basic Skills Improvement Act, Public Law 95-561. The Basic Skills legislation encourages Federal, State, and local education agencies to utilize " . . . all available resources for elementary and secondary education to improve instruction so that all children are able to master the basic skills of reading, mathematics, and effective communication, both written and oral." Section 209 of the act specifically authorizes the Secretary of Education to collect and analyze information about the results of activities carried out under Title II. Thus, improved instruction in the basic communication skills—speaking, listening, and writing—has become the focus of programs and research projects throughout the country.

The booklets in this series, *The Talking and Writing Series, K-12: Successful Classroom Practices*, provide information to assist teachers and curriculum planners at all grade levels to improve communication skills across all major disciplines. Developed under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education, the 12 booklets apply recent research in oral and written communication instruction to classroom practice. They contain descriptions of teaching practices; summaries and analyses of pertinent theories and research findings; practical suggestions for teachers; and lists of references and resources. Also included is a booklet on inservice training which suggests how the series can be used in professional development programs.

The booklets were developed through the efforts of an Editorial Advisory Committee comprised of 14 professionals in both the academic and research areas of written and oral communication education. The group worked with the sponsoring agency, the Department of Education's Basic Skills Improvement Program, and Dingle Associates, Inc., a professional services firm.

The committee members, in consultation with the Department of Education staff, chose issues and developed topics. Ten of the 14 committee members authored papers. The committee reviewed the papers and provided additional expertise in preparing the final booklets, which were edited and designed by Dingle Associates.

We are grateful to the committee members, advisors, and all others who contributed their expertise to the project. The committee members were:

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It is hoped that the booklets in this series will be valuable to classroom and administrative professionals in developing or restructuring their communication skills programs. They may also be useful to community and parent groups in their dialogue with members of the educational system. The ultimate benefit of this project, however, will be realized in our children's enhanced ability to communicate, both orally and in written language.

Sherwood R. Simons
Project Officer

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INSERVICE TO IMPROVE SPEAKING AND WRITING IN GRADES K-12

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I extend my gratitude to Don M. Boileau, director of Educational Services for the Speech Communication Association, for the support and suggestions that he gave in the preparation of this booklet.

INTRODUCTION

We are now at the point where we must educate people in what nobody knew yesterday and prepare in our schools for what no one knows yet, but what some people must know tomorrow.

—Margaret Mead

Communities change. Knowledge explodes. Technology races ahead. The "Communication Revolution" leaps from micro chips to satellites. Messages by the thousands cover continents in seconds. The unknown becomes the known and creates new environments and new challenges for education in communication.

A dramatic decline in pupil enrollment, however, has resulted in little or no turnover in school staffs and few new teachers to bring in new ideas to meet these challenges. Opportunities for classroom teachers to learn, seek fresh ideas, improve as teachers, and renew their commitment to teaching are negligible in many school districts. Today's school principals face the challenge of providing to these teachers instructional leadership in both oral and written communication.

Teachers determine the school's curriculum. They select, plan, and teach their own lessons. Through these daily decisions, teachers define the essentials of education for each child. Yet, in the typical classroom, the essential skills of speaking and writing are frequently neglected. Inservice education in these skills is needed to give teachers opportunities to pursue learning, reflect on their teaching, practice new skills, interact with other teachers, develop workable strategies, and renew themselves, both personally and professionally.

Too often, inservice education has been relegated to an isolated workshop, a half day set aside with a speaker or two, or an evening extension course that sometimes extends the teacher's day more than the teacher's learning. Rather than the single-shot approach, effective inservice education in oral and written communication needs to contain three fundamental components:

- a plan for developing the individual teacher's own speaking, listening, and writing skills;
- a program based on assessment of the school district's and the teachers' needs for improved instruction in oral and written communication;
- and a long range plan that includes language arts teachers as communication specialists and all teachers as instructors of communication skills.

This booklet will provide the framework for successful inservice education by answering the following questions:

- WHY do teachers need inservice in oral and written communication?
- WHAT skills, knowledge, and attitudes should be included?
- HOW can effective inservice in oral and written communication be developed?
- WHO should plan, support, implement, and evaluate the inservice?
- WHAT plans, resources, and models are available for implementing the inservice education plan?
- HOW can success be determined?

WHY? NEGLECTED ESSENTIALS

All teaching is an act of communication. Teachers communicate by speaking and writing to students and by listening and reading students' messages. According to Lawrence Sarbaugh, professor of communication at Michigan State University, the teacher "manages a communication environment" in which the teacher's own communication skills become the basis for promoting effective learning strategies. In this communication environment, the student's ability to listen to directions, write answers to questions, read information in textbooks and on video display screens, and interact orally in the classroom becomes the basis for successful learning. All teachers indirectly assume a responsibility for providing an effective communication environment. Competent communication skills rank significantly on any list of successful teaching traits.

Other booklets in this series have explained in detail new research on communication competence and on the importance of integrating oral and written skills with other subjects. Teachers who do not know the implications of research for their own teaching have difficulty knowing what to do and when and how to do it. Even those teachers who have had training in teaching writing, speaking, and listening skills may not know the implications of recent research findings for their own teaching.

Incidental, rather than developmental, instruction in oral and written communication is all too common in many school districts. The elementary school teacher may include oral and written activities in lesson plans only to serve as vehicles for measuring knowledge in content areas, such as assigning a book report to discover if the book was read and not as a planned activity for teaching students how to organize ideas to create a special effect on an audience.

The secondary school teacher may view speaking as an art form limited to such activities as public speaking, debate, and oral inter-

pretation, and may decide that these activities belong in an elective speech course. Both elementary and secondary teachers may limit oral communication programs to such activities as listening to stories and reports, discussing in class, and reading aloud. These activities, however, do not sufficiently develop the communication skills of interaction in which the speaker and the listener are deliberating over real concerns in a genuine attempt to communicate an idea or solve a problem. This functional approach requires students to employ critical thinking skills that are complex because the speaker and the listener roles are interchanged, and the message must be continually modified according to each individual's purposes, perceptions, and responses.

Lack of developmental instruction in secondary schools is also evidenced by writing assignments confined to essay tests, note-taking, and term papers. In some schools, narrative and expressive writing forms may be overlooked. Students may be missing the developmental experiences inherent in writing poetry, play scripts, monologues, journals, autobiographies, or Socratic dialogues (Moffett and Wagner, 1976).

In the past, undergraduate studies for English teachers emphasized literature instead of written communication. Speech communication teachers were prepared in public speaking and group discussion with little preparation in interpersonal communication. Journalism teachers were taught how to produce newspapers and yearbooks but not how to develop students' writing skills.

Teacher training in the past rarely gave as much emphasis to the communication base of teaching as it did to sociological and psychological foundations of education. The current emphasis on listening, writing, and functional communication was *not* part of the training of most teachers. Traditionally, the teacher training program has relied on student teaching to develop the teacher's communication skills. Since developing good communication skills requires both knowledge and practice, the school district needs to provide inservice education that contains both components.

The demand for oral and written communication inservice education in today's classroom is illustrated in the following chart:

Skill	Teacher Knowledge	Elementary Training	Secondary Training	Inservice Demand
Listening	Least	Minor Emphasis	Indirect	Strong Demand
Speaking	Some	Minor Emphasis	Indirect	Strong Demand
Writing	Some	Minor Emphasis	Indirect	Strong Demand
Reading	Most	Required	Some States Now Require	Demand

Thus, if listening, speaking, and writing are rarely taught in teacher preparation, the challenge remains with school districts to provide staff development

through inservice education for these communication skills.

Some teachers know that good writing is more than the correct use of mechanical skills. Good writing is refined thinking. Some teachers know that effective listening and speaking require more than paying attention or using correct grammar; they require thought processes that are responsive to interactive communication. Some teachers know that oral and written communication activities provide students opportunities to formulate, externalize, and evaluate their thinking. The resulting diversity of knowledge and skills among teachers requires inservice education that provides choices and a balanced offering of topics covering knowledge and skills. *Effective inservice education programs must build on what teachers know as well as what they need to know.*

WHAT? SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND ATTITUDES

To write requires writing; to speak requires speaking; to read requires reading; and to listen requires listening to both the words and the soul.

—Anonymous

Skills

Old truths come back to haunt us. The recent "time-on-task" research seems to validate the past emphasis on classroom time for practice. Students learn best when they have many experiences in writing and speaking for different audiences and for different purposes. Their communication skills develop as they experiment with a variety of speaking and writing situations. As processors of language, students need opportunities to explore the potential of different words and different phrases to convey ideas, create a mood, or evoke an action. They also need opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of their oral and written messages so that they can improve them.

Teachers also need to practice communication skills. The National Writing Project and its nearly 100 successful dissemination sites provides evidence that improving the writing skills of teachers leads to improved student writing. The National Writing Project stresses the need for teachers to write while students are writing and then share with the students their own efforts.

In a similar manner, the teacher who models effective oral communication skills helps students become competent communicators. Repeated studies using Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories demonstrate that teachers *under estimate* the amount of time that they spend talking, and *overestimate* the amount of time students spend talking. To understand the impact of this "talking most of the time" modeling, recall the adage that teachers learn how to teach from teachers who taught them. Thus, the college lecture has had a significant impact on K-12 education at the expense of interactive activities, such as class discussions, small-group work, improvisation, and peer

evaluation of writing. Developing the teacher's skill, therefore, is as essential in the plans for oral and written communication inservice education as presenting knowledge and working on curriculum development.

Knowledge

Knowledge represents the theoretical structure for which teachers choose communication activities. In many school districts, teachers can learn theory through course work at a nearby college or university or at off-campus or extension units. The school principal or language arts specialist, however, should have primary responsibility for providing an inservice education program which integrates the knowledge goals with curriculum development and with the development of teacher skills.

Writing. In the last decade, the nature of writing instruction changed. Evidence of the need for instructional programs on writing was recently substantiated in a report titled *Reading, Thinking and Writing*, by the National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP), an educational research project funded by the National Institute of Education. Based on an analysis of student writing in 1979-80, NAEP recommends that schools restructure programs to create more discussion situations and extensive writing activities that demand critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. NAEP recommends that systematic writing instruction be included in every school's English program and that teachers of all subject areas be encouraged to include writing tasks in courses. Stating that most teachers have had no systematic training in teaching writing, NAEP recommends that inservice education on teaching writing and thinking skills be given to teachers of English as well as to teachers of other subjects (*National Assessment of Educational Progress*, 1981).

Student competency in written communication develops best in classrooms where teachers provide many opportunities for students to practice and experiment with various writing activities for a wide range of purposes. Students will vary words and sentence structure and employ different writing skills when they write for different purposes and audiences. If the purpose of the writing task is to persuade a principal to lengthen school lunchtime, students will use writing skills that differ from skills used to describe the splendor of a sunset to a blind person; or the skills used to give directions to a friend to care for and feed a pet. By writing compositions that they assign, teachers can discover the skills required by students to complete the assignment. When teachers share their own writing with the class, they help establish trust and a climate for sharing. The classroom teacher's function is to help students realize that they have something worthwhile to write, and to give them the support and skills that they need to write well. Other goals in writing should reflect the school district's goals and directions—for example, targeting the writing goals of the College Board's Project EQuality for secondary schools or following a program based on a sequence of writing experiences. Each program requires an appropriate knowledge base that can be gained through a purposeful inservice education plan.

Speaking. The knowledge base for speaking should be an extended concept of oral communication. Teachers need to know how a functional communication emphasis expands oral communication from a public speaking base to a spectrum that ranges from conversation to mass communication. Because students need to make language work for them in everyday conversations, in small-group interactions, and on public speaking occasions, instruction should center on helping them with the functions of informing, controlling, expressing feelings, ritualizing, and imagining.

Some teachers view speech communication as an innate endowment of students and see no need to provide classroom instruction in functional communication; others need to know how to integrate oral communication into their current plans. Almost every teacher agrees that students should learn to speak and to listen, but only a few attempt to provide systematic instruction in oral communication. If teachers do not know how to teach these skills, or if they assume that students know how to communicate, they may need help in understanding the functions of speaking.

Listening. Listening as a skill applies to classroom interactions that range from processing directions to participating in small-group work. Listening includes more than simple message recall, such as, "Ten sentences are to be handed in by 11:35." Listening also involves interpreting both the tone of voice and pace to determine the personal emotions in the message.

Another listening skill, "active listening," is one of the essential skills of Teacher Effectiveness Training in Thomas Gordon's programs. Students praise teachers who can listen with empathy.

Teachers can also learn from inservice programs that instructional methods for listening should help students understand, interpret, and evaluate the speaker's message. Students need to develop facility in using different listening skills in different situations, such as:

- **Appreciative—** to enjoy or gain sensory impressions
- **Discriminative—** to distinguish facts from opinions, learn clues that reveal the speaker's emotional state and credibility, and develop insight into nonverbal communication
- **Comprehensive—** to understand meaning
- **Therapeutic—** to listen to someone talk out a personal problem and learn to be supportive but not judgmental
- **Critical—** to evaluate the message and establish criteria for making judgments (Wolvin and Coakley, 1979)

Listening has appeal for a districtwide inservice program because teachers from K-12 should teach and practice good listening skills. Inservice sessions to develop listening skills should include practice in good listening—generally in small groups—as well as knowledge of what listening entails and how it can be taught.

Attitudes

Fear of writing and speaking can cause teachers to avoid teaching these activities. Ignorance of the best way to teach writing and speaking can also cause teachers to avoid stressing writing and speaking skills. For other teachers, lack of knowledge about how to integrate these skills with subject content leads to an attitude of resistance. Inservice education must address these attitudes about communication skills and help teachers overcome such obstacles.

By helping teachers to improve their own communication skills, inservice leaders can assist them with any attitudinal barriers that they have to teaching students oral and written communication. The resulting improvement in student performance, in turn, will reinforce the teacher's positive attitude toward communication skills.

As lifelong learners, teachers want to grow professionally. They are willing to devote time to staff development activities, if they are assured that these activities will help them teach students better. Inservice education can help teachers develop:

- techniques for motivating students to write and to speak;
- skill in diagnosing and assessing student strengths and weaknesses in oral and written communication;
- methods for helping students become more competent at each stage of development in oral and written communication;
- skill in handling classroom and small-group discussion;
- methods for helping students develop functional communication competencies and good listening skills; and
- skill in assisting students to use the writing process and to function in writing groups.

HOW? DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE INSERVICE EDUCATION

Process for change

To ensure that inservice plans are responsive to the changing needs of teachers, inservice leaders must continually assess teachers' strengths and determine the needs and concerns that emerge after each phase of staff development. Inservice education must be thought of as a developmental process for changing individuals, rather than as a series of one-time events. Workshops, university courses, classroom visitations, and other staff development activities must be considered as components of a broader plan for effecting teacher growth.

Educational change is a complex process that demands time. Depending on the significance of the difference between current practice and innovation, implementing educational change may require as much as 3 to 5 years (Louchs and Pratt, 1979).

Inservice education should be planned to extend over a sufficient period to help teachers internalize the underlying principles and approaches for teaching oral and written communication. Time should be planned for processing and sharing learning, thinking critically and creatively, exchanging opinions, and redirecting activities. As teachers experience change, they move through stages of concern that need time to consider.

Research at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at the University of Texas at Austin identifies concerns teachers hold about innovation. Concerns expressed include:

- **"How will using it affect me?"**
- **"How can I manage it?"**
- **"How is my use affecting students?"**
- **"I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what other teachers are doing."**
- **"I have some ideas about something that would work even better" (Louchs and Pratt, 1979).**

By giving attention to teachers' feelings and perceptions, inservice leaders acknowledge the highly personal nature of educational change. Personal satisfaction is a significant factor in determining the success or failure of inservice education.

Assessing teacher needs

Just as teaching begins with assessing students' knowledge and then builds on their skills as well as their needs, inservice education begins with assessing what teachers know and then builds on their skills and needs. Simply asking some teachers what their concerns are may not provide sufficient information. A combination of assessment methods can provide more complete information. The following methods may be helpful in identifying teacher needs:

- **Systematic polling:** Identify needs through a formal assessment of teacher attitudes and skills, using a questionnaire or checklist.
- **Curricular analysis:** Using a matrix that compares classroom assignments to school district or State goals, a school can plot what has been taught or needs to be developed.

- **Teacher observation:** Request that evaluators review their evaluation instruments to identify common problems in teaching and modeling communication skills.

- **Assessing students:** Assess student performances to determine areas in which teachers may need guidance. Holistic scoring of student writing is an efficient method for assessing large groups of students.

- **Small-group discussion sessions:** Schedule small-group discussions with a leader and a recorder and no more than five teachers. Structure topics that are to be discussed, and chart needs that are expressed.

A simple questionnaire, such as the one in Figure 1, can provide information on present classroom practices, helpful instructional materials, and student difficulties. These questions may be printed and distributed or used as basic questions in a discussion with teachers.

In addition, classroom observation can reveal the quality and the quantity of student learning and teacher planning for oral and written communication skills. Using several assessment methods helps identify the most significant needs for inservice education.

Figure 1

Needs Assessment
for
Oral Communication Skills

School _____

The inservice speaker at our last meeting generated interest among teachers in learning more about successful programs, teaching strategies, and materials on teaching oral communication skills. Please help us develop inservice programs that will be useful to you.

Would you share with us information on your oral communication program by responding to the following questions:

1. **Describe briefly any approaches that you have found to be especially effective in helping students with oral communication.**

2. **Describe any materials that you have found to be helpful in teaching oral communication.**

3. **What are the difficulties that you feel your students have in oral communication?**

4. **What problems do you have in planning oral communication activities for your class?**

Short and long range plans

When teacher needs have been identified, they should be ranked by importance and categorized as short range (those that can be handled in a few sessions) or long range (those that require consistent work).

Short range plans may include giving motivational workshops, sharing successful classroom activities, identifying resources for oral and written communication skills, and designing curriculum support materials. Individual workshops on specific topics should be spread throughout the inservice education plan.

Long range plans should comprise a series of programs that assist in changing teachers. Such plans should provide teachers time to practice the new ideas in the classrooms and reflect on their success. Long range plans should also include reviewing and revising curriculum materials that support the oral and written communication program.

The inservice plan must address not only individual concerns, but also the collective diversity of interests and needs among teachers. Inservice sessions should offer choices of content and different levels of complexity.

By *involving teachers* in selecting inservice topics, inservice leaders can help create in them positive attitudes. Teachers can be asked to choose from a long list of topics appropriate to teacher needs and district goals. Inservice leaders should ensure that someone is available—either from within the school district or in a consultant capacity—to lead each potential workshop or curriculum session.

After the survey is tallied, the preferred choices become potential topics for programs. On the day of the workshops, numerous choices should be made available so that teachers can select topics best suited for their subjects and skills. The original list of topics might look like the example in Figure 2.

Teachers as learners

To develop a positive attitude in teachers toward inservice education, inservice leaders should use instructional approaches that adapt to the teacher as a learner. Adult learners are capable of growing and learning, and like student learners, they respond positively to success-oriented instructional approaches.

Figure 2
Inservice Topics
Selection Sheet

Directions: Check the top five (5) sessions you would be most interested in attending. Select at least one topic from each column.

KNOWLEDGE	TEACHER SKILLS	CURRICULUM WORKSHOPS
___ Listening theory	___ Improving interpersonal skills	___ Using small-group discussion
___ Functional communication	___ Improving personal writing skills	___ Using oral interpretation in your classes
___ Classroom communication	___ Leading classroom discussions	___ Using creative dramatics
___ Critical thinking and language development	___ Question strategy practice	___ Journal writing
___ Recent writing research	___ Active listening	___ Using interviews in your classes
___ Self-concept and communication	___ Evaluating student papers	___ Using debate
___ Small-group theory	___ Conducting student conferences on writing	___ Writing poetic forms
___ Mass media and learning	___ Critiquing speeches	___ Writing and performing commercials
___ Universe of discourse	___ Observing classroom communication	___ Writing across the disciplines
___ Effective communication for preventing racial, sexual, handicapped stereotypes	___ Improving your own writing	___ Using oral presentations across the disciplines
	___ Organizing reader response groups	

Adult learners generally:

- need some motivation to learn;
- learn by doing and develop skill by practice;
- respond positively to genuine praise;
- want to please;

- need time and help to internalize new ideas;
- need reassurance and reaffirmation that what they do is right;
- learn better when they feel good about themselves;
- get new impressions through the senses, especially seeing;
- tie learning to what they already know;
- need to understand what is expected of them—what is to be learned and how they are to respond;
- learn at different rates, have different learning styles, and respond differently to particular teaching styles;
- can concentrate on only one concept at a time; and
- retain longer information that they understand than information that they memorize.

Adult learners, like students, vary in learning levels and learning styles. Inservice leaders should consider the various levels of learning present in teacher groups. Some learners want practical information, want to be told what is right and what is wrong, and want generalized information translated into specific procedures that are relevant to them. Thus, inservice activities for them must be practical, explicit, clearly organized, and relevant to their classrooms.

Other learners desire to do things on their own, realize there is more than one way to accomplish the same goal, are more interested in principles than in practical information, and desire to develop their own application of these principles. For them, inservice activities must provide alternatives so that they can choose what is to be learned and have a say in what the inservice experience will be. They find group discussions, presentations of various viewpoints, and opportunities to develop applications for their own classroom appropriate activities.

Additionally, some learners are self-directed and able to organize their own instruction. These learners need more individualized staff development programs and, therefore, should be involved in collaborative activities in planning as well as in presenting inservice education. A few learners generate staff renewal ideas and should be given support in implementing them.

Differences in career stages should be also considered by inservice leaders in planning appropriate programs. The beginning teacher needs considerably more support in teaching techniques, immediate feedback, and fill-in-the-gap content. The practicing teacher, with 3 to 8 years experience, generally seeks additional subject expertise and may be interested in new professional roles, such as grade-level leader, team leader, or department chairperson. The most experienced teacher has developed classroom and subject matter expertise and may be tapped to share this knowledge (Bents and Howey, 1981).

WHO? ROLES, RUBRICS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of the principal

The principal has a critical role in leading and supporting teachers in inservice education, and is the prime mover in bringing about change (Lieberman and Miller, 1981). Although most of the principal's time must be spent in administrative and management duties, the principal, as an instructional leader, must take time for professional development in the essentials of education. As well as serving on the staff development team, the principal should be committed to learning as much as possible about oral and written communication. It is reasonable to assume that improving the knowledge and skills of the principal, in turn, will improve the knowledge and skills of teachers working under the principal's guidance.

In addition to being knowledgeable about oral and written communication, the principal must be committed to a schoolwide focus on improving students' writing, speaking, and listening skills. The principal, to have an impact on students, should:

- establish schoolwide objectives which focus on improving student communication skills in the school's plan for improvement;
- project a schoolwide emphasis on writing, speaking, and listening skills in all subject areas;
- inform parents about the oral and written communication program through planned PTA programs and newsletters;
- give schoolwide recognition to students who have demonstrated achievement in oral and written communication;
- encourage student participation in a variety of writing and speaking contests, such as those sponsored by local and State agencies, national publications, and service and professional organizations;
- encourage publication and sharing of student writing through a variety of media; and
- encourage student participation in making school announcements, speaking and performing before school and community groups, and discussing in small groups.

To benefit the grade-level or subject-area department, the principal should:

- ensure that each grade-level or subject-area department has incorporated speaking and writing objectives into a list of yearly instructional objectives;

- encourage grade-level or subject-area departmental meetings that focus on teaching strategies for improving student oral and written communication;

- attend grade-level or subject-area departmental meetings to listen to and respond to problems involving implementing the communication program;

- provide instructional materials that support the oral and written communication program;

- ensure that a writing folder revealing student progress in writing is kept on each student, and read random samples of student writing on file in these folders ; and

- encourage evaluation of writing and speaking skills of all students in a grade level.

To benefit teachers, the principal should:

- ensure that each teacher includes objectives on improving techniques for teaching oral and written communication in his or her evaluation plan for each school year;

- provide adequate, unencumbered planning time for teachers to plan writing, speaking, and listening lessons, and to evaluate papers;

- ensure that each teacher provides guidelines for students to follow in oral and written communication;

- ensure that each teacher follows written criteria for evaluating student writing, speaking, and listening;

- schedule classroom visitations to observe the oral and written communication program in action; and

- ensure that each teacher incorporates into lessons the three-stage process for improving writing: prewriting, composing, and rewriting, including activities for sharing.

To be successful, inservice education must be comprehensive, concentrated, and continuous and must have the commitment of both teachers and principals. To establish a sense of ownership and shared commitment, both teachers and principals should be involved in planning, implementing, and

evaluating the inservice education. They should see themselves as a professional community of educators consulting together, offering suggestions, sharing ideas, and providing support.

Commitment and involvement of teachers

The inservice plan's success depends on teacher commitment. It is influenced by the positive support of the school principal, the equal treatment teachers receive as partners in the process, and the belief that they will become better teachers. The extent of each teacher's confidence in his or her ability to help even the least motivated student is a strong determinant in the positive outcome of any inservice effort (McLaughlin and Marsh, 1978).

Another important factor in the success of an inservice plan is the procedure for implementation. According to the Rand Change Agent Study, a 4-year study by the Rand Corporation sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education, training teachers in specific skills has a transient effect unless teachers are given ongoing assistance in the classroom, a role in inservice decisionmaking, concrete and practical help from consultants, and opportunities to exchange ideas with other teachers through regularly scheduled meetings (McLaughlin and Marsh, 1978).

An examination of research on training teachers reveals that the most effective inservice plan for getting teachers to use new approaches in the classroom presents theory, modeling or demonstration, practice under simulated conditions with consistent feedback to teachers, and coaching on how to apply the new approach. Following this model, inservice education in oral and written communication can produce positive transfer of teacher learning to classroom practice (Joyce and Showers, 1980).

Teachers as facilitators

In an interactive classroom, the teacher's role changes from that of an information disseminator to that of a guide and helper who provides experiential learning and assists students in acquiring insights and knowledge from experiences. Serving as a trusted adult audience, the teacher encourages students to share ideas, gain fluency, and find their personal voices in communication.

No teaching process will succeed unless there is a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. Positive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students are the foundation for an effective oral and written communication program. Teachers must take time at the beginning of the school year to build a classroom language community that encourages interaction not only between teacher and student, but also between student and student. In a supportive communicative atmosphere, students will become more responsive and less afraid to experiment with language.

The communication program should aim to improve student thinking as well as student skills. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to participate in dialogue with students to understand them and their thought processes. Teachers will need to remember that "teacher talk" is not dialogue; it is one-way message-giving. Teachers need to analyze the amount of such talk in

the classroom to determine what is effective in helping students develop communication skills. By learning the technique of asking questions that will elicit the different levels of thinking and reasoning of students, teachers can engage them in the critical thinking process.

Role of inservice leaders

Inservice success is built on the combined leadership support of a skilled inservice leader, interested and involved central-office staff, and an actively supportive building principal. As these leaders plan the inservice programs for oral and written communication, they need to incorporate into the plan expert teaching techniques that can serve as models for teachers to use in the classrooms. Inservice leaders should:

- tailor-make the program to fit the teachers involved; begin with what they already know, capitalize on their strengths, and plan to meet their needs and concerns;
- establish a conducive environment for learning; make the learning interesting, challenging, introspective, useful, and attainable; present the programs in the school where it is accessible to teachers;
- actively involve teachers in learning experiences that are concrete and that model good classroom experiences by:
  - —building in opportunities for success in each learning experience;
  - —providing opportunities for teachers to practice what they learn;
  - —providing both immediate and progressive feedback on each teacher's progress; provide only constructive criticism;
  - —using demonstration and audiovisual aids to appeal to as many senses as possible;
  - —including opportunities for observation of other teachers who are practicing the skills;
- provide variety, balance, and flexibility in activities to meet different learning styles and content/skills needs of teachers; give teachers a choice; and
- assess what teachers are learning at each step of the inservice plan and modify plans to meet changing needs of teachers.

By treating teachers as fellow professionals, learning with them, providing

for interaction, being attuned to their ideas and styles of learning, and responding to their needs as they express them, inservice leaders can facilitate teacher learning and growth more effectively in oral and written communication.

WHAT? PLANS, RESOURCES, AND MODELS

Plan of action

A building-based support team should serve as a staff development team to all faculty members being served by the inservice program. The support team should provide regularly scheduled forums as well as consultations to individual teachers. If more than one school is involved, a committee with representative teachers and administrators from each school may serve to coordinate the program across schools.

Working collaboratively with the inservice leader, the staff development team or coordinating committee should write the inservice education plan. In the plan they should:

- identify the underlying principles of oral and written communication;
- determine goals and specific objectives of the inservice education plan;
- design inservice programs and the sequence of activities;
- describe major inservice workshops;
- determine resources, time, and money;
- assess strengths of the staff members; and
- determine the need for consultants.

The final, written inservice education plan should be officially adopted and supported by administrators of the school, as well as by the superintendent of the school district and the school board.

At the secondary school, the inservice plan may begin with teachers in the English department and extend first to teachers in social studies and then to those in other departments. In the elementary school, the inservice plan may begin at the primary grades and extend to the upper grades. The inservice plan in a large school district may begin with a collaboration between two or more schools and extend to a pyramid arrangement involving schools

that feed into other schools. Whatever the arrangement, there must be a cooperative effort and a commitment by the school system to provide the necessary support to improve communication skills.

Colleagues

After establishing the underlying principles of inservice education in oral and written communication, assessing teacher needs, and designing the most appropriate plan, the staff development team should identify the people who will provide the programs. They should not overlook colleagues who have expertise and are sources for practical information. Teachers working with teachers can provide an invaluable dimension to a staff development program.

Quality local resource personnel who are able to give "on-call" assistance are generally more effective than outside consultants in providing concrete practical advice for teachers in their own situations (McLaughlin and Marsh, 1978). Consultants, teachers in other schools, members of State education departments, representatives from professional organizations, or university staff, serve better in a supportive role as helpers, inspirers, or catalysts.

Principals should study staff personnel records to determine which teachers have taken course work in oral or written communication or have participated in extracurricular activities involving oral or written communication. Those teachers who have some expertise can be tapped to help with inservice planning or with workshops. If no teachers in the school have had training in speaking and writing skills, the principal should identify teachers with an interest in these skills and encourage them to study the methodology and develop lessons which can be shared with other teachers. For future planning, hiring new teachers should be determined by the need for teachers with experience in teaching oral or written communication.

By tapping local school talent and planning structured meetings for sharing information, the staff development team can begin the in-school program. Classroom management of a communication program will probably be the most pressing issue. Teachers need opportunities to discuss what works and what does not work in teaching speaking and writing skills. They need to consider methods for incorporating speaking and writing activities into what is probably an already full daily schedule. A series of questions such as the following can form the basis for discussions on classroom management:

1. In what ways can the language arts skills be integrated or clustered to allow maximum use of instructional time?

2. What cooperative speaking and writing activities can be planned to increase the potential of peer assistance?

3. How can the classroom setting be structured to allow for independent student work as well as for small-group work?

4. How should student speaking and writing activities be evaluated?

5. What are some management procedures that allow time for teacher-student and small-group conferences?

6. What are effective techniques for making speaking and writing more meaningful to students?

7. What constitutes effective student assignments in speaking and writing?

If regularly scheduled sharing sessions are provided, teachers can explore collectively ways to manage classroom time and space. Teachers working together can solve many of the management problems inherent in teaching speaking and writing.

Community members

Teachers can also take advantage of outside help. Community members can share with students and teachers their on-the-job requirements for using speaking and writing skills. Parents can be trained to assist students in a tutorial role and to evaluate basic elements in student papers. Lay readers in a school's language arts program can provide valuable assistance in individual instruction as well as create strong ties for school/community relationships. In every community, there are citizens concerned about the educational program and eager to volunteer time to help students. Schools should capitalize on the strengths of these community members by defining the help that they can give and by providing the training that they will need.

Consultants

Working cooperatively with other school districts, inservice leaders can exchange teacher talent and ask teachers from other schools to share their successes. Fresh ideas and tried-and-true methods can serve as stimuli to teachers seeking help.

In addition, organized teacher training programs in teaching writing and speaking skills can be cooperatively planned with nearby universities. Partnerships with universities have several advantages for implementing a school's inservice program. First, teachers can be rewarded with graduate credit which, in turn, can be applied toward an advanced degree, certification renewal, or higher-pay increments (in school districts that offer that incentive). Second, university personnel and school staff leaders have the resources and time for cooperative planning. Third, through contracted courses, costs can be shared by the two institutions, both of which can gain benefits from exchanging services. If a university is not available, school administrators can negotiate with the staff at community colleges for workshops and consultant services.

State departments of education provide another resource for inservice programs. These agencies usually have the funds and the personnel to gather information on who and what is available to schools. A statewide directory

of inservice programs listing workshop topics and giving objectives, descriptions, and contact persons might be helpful to some school districts. Some State agencies will make provision for released time for teachers to present workshops to other teachers.

Professional materials

In addition to identifying people who can help with staff development of teachers, inservice leaders should provide teaching resources such as books, filmstrips, films, and videotapes that instruct teachers in speaking and writing skills. (These instructional materials are recommended in other booklets in this series.) Making these resources easily accessible in a central location, and including oral summaries of them in inservice sessions, will stimulate teachers to use the resources.

The adage that a picture is worth a thousand words takes on special meaning for the inservice leader who uses videotapes to show teachers the most effective teaching techniques for oral and written communication skills. A series of color tapes on outstanding teachers of writing from grades 3-12 has been produced by Fred Grossberg, a professor of English at George Mason University (Fairfax, Va.), as a result of a National Endowment for the Humanities grant awarded to Fairfax County Public Schools and the university. These tapes and accompanying teacher guides have been distributed to the National Writing Project sites. Information about these tapes is available from Fairfax County Public Schools.

Professional organizations

Professional organizations can serve schools with their expertise and through their publications of standards for teacher preparation and curriculum, curriculum materials and books, informational journals, newsletters, conventions, and miniconferences. Journals provide current research and practice as a way for teachers to keep up with the "latest." Both the National Council of Teachers of English and the Speech Communication Association have journals *(English Journal* and *Communication Education)*, as well as curriculum materials for inservice listed in their current publications catalogues. The Speech Communication Association also publishes a list of national educators who can provide help to a school district (*Resources in Assessment of Communication*, 1982).

Both groups sponsor an annual convention with workshops that can train teachers who, in turn, can bring back to the school information for inservice programs. These national organizations also have State and/or regional affiliates which offer conferences. In addition to individual memberships, institutional memberships are available. Ideally, each English language arts teacher should belong to at least one of these professional organizations because they provide excellent resources for teachers in speaking and writing skills.

The Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse (ERIC) through its bibliographic services and publications is another national resource

for inservice information. By stockpiling curriculum guides, teaching techniques, and research articles in its *Resources in Education*, ERIC can provide noncopyrighted material that is helpful for distribution at inservice sessions. Using a computer search of the ERIC files, workshop leaders can identify relevant publications from both *Resources in Education* and *Current Index to Journals in Education*, an index for the ERIC system.

Curriculum guides

To support an oral and written communication program, teachers will need curriculum materials such as curriculum guides, lesson plans, teaching strategies, and textbooks. Every school district should have a K-12 curriculum guide that defines and describes the oral and written communication program and lists specific instructional objectives for students at each grade level. The curriculum guide should be written by experienced teachers representing different grade levels and should provide the following support for the classroom teacher:

- Philosophy and goals that articulate the keys to effective oral and written communication
- Practical research findings on language acquisition and effective teaching techniques
- Characteristics of the writing process and of functional communication competencies
- Instructional objectives that include the specific oral and written skills and concepts to be practiced at each grade level
- Suggestions for classroom management of the oral and written communication program
- Lesson plans and classroom activities for teaching the instructional objectives
- Instructional strategies for teaching the different modes or forms that speaking and writing can take (such as interviews, extemporaneous speeches, or small-group discussions; and letters, scripts, or narratives)

The philosophy statement and the goals should communicate the importance of helping students become more competent in oral and written communication through developing their interests and self-confidence and building on their strengths. The curriculum guide should make clear the *nature of language acquisition* and the fact that student growth in communication

skills occurs gradually and requires nurturing and support activities. Teachers must understand that students will more readily strive for communication competence when their audiences are authentic and their purposes are meaningful and clear. When students feel that their written and spoken words have value, and when they discover that they can make language work for them, they work harder at communication activities. Even very young children have the capacity, as well as the need, to function as masters of communication. Students at all grade levels process language, learning to use it—even when they abuse it—to bring meaning into their lives. The classroom should be a laboratory in which students can engage in dynamic interaction and actively discover how language communicates.

The curriculum guide should describe characteristics of the *writing process* and of *functional communication competencies*. Both oral and written communication are processes that operate within given contexts and include:

- an audience which has a potential for being affected;
- a purpose which directs the message; and
- a topic which should be meaningful to those involved.

In addition, oral communication includes a setting (time and place) and a mode (e.g., conversation, speech, debate). Written communication also has a mode or form that prescribes the design of the composition (e.g., letter, essay, poem, news article, narrative, advertisement).

Oral communication is a process that takes on significance for students when they discover how to make language work for them as they interact with others in everyday situations. To grow in oral competency, students must practice conversations in a variety of situations, analyze the responses of others, examine the ways others communicate in similar situations, and make informed judgments about the effectiveness of their messages (Wood, 1977).

The curriculum guide should provide instructional methods that help students strive for:

- fluency and explicitness in expressing ideas and feelings;
- sensitivity in responding to what others say;
- flexibility in adjusting to different people for different purposes and in changing approaches and strategies, as needed;
- inquisitiveness that seeks out information and shares it with those mutually interested; and
- capability in monitoring communication effectiveness and making necessary changes (Brown, 1982).

A three-stage process for guiding writing—prewriting, composing, and rewriting—is an effective model for teaching students how to organize thinking and communicate meaning clearly to others. The stages provide a framework for the writing process; a fourth stage, sharing, is integral to the process because it gives significance to the writing. During prewriting, students identify the audience and the purpose, both of which direct the message. Prewriting activities should stimulate students to generate, expand, and focus ideas. Composing activities should help students refine and develop this main idea and organize the material into a readable draft. Rewriting activities should help students refine and revise the draft into a polished paper. Sharing activities will help students gain a sense of competency and delight in their ability to communicate through the written word (Fairfax County Public Schools, *Guide for Teaching Writing*, 1977).

Instructional Objectives in the curriculum guide should be sequentially organized, building on and reinforcing at each grade level the skills and concepts from preceding grade levels. Figure 3 illustrates a component of one school's instructional objectives for developing sentence structure in student writing. Figure 4 illustrates sample instructional objectives for developing formal speaking skills.

To assist teachers in classroom management of the program, the curriculum guide should contain information on developing lessons and organizing the classroom's physical space. Time-saving tips on grading speeches and papers and providing for individual student needs should be offered. Sample lesson plans and suggested activities should also be included.

In addition, the guide should also provide instructional and evaluation strategies for teaching the various speaking and writing modes or forms. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the forms of writing students should experience in the elementary and in the secondary grades.

Sample 5-year plan

A detailed curriculum guide not only can outline the oral and written communication program for all classroom teachers, but it also can serve as an inservice training guide. The 5-year plan for inservice education on teaching writing in Fairfax County Public Schools[1] began in 1977 and was built on two curriculum guides, the *Guide for Teaching Writing K-6* and the *Guide for Teaching Writing 7-12*. Teachers experienced in different grade levels in the school system were paid to write these guides in summer curriculum development workshops under the leadership of the English language arts curriculum specialist.

In turn, these teachers served as workshop leaders in presenting the guides to colleagues. Sixty-minute workshops on each section of the guide were planned and scripted by the teachers and scheduled on a countywide inservice contract day. All English language arts teachers attended the workshops and received individual copies of the guide. Followup workshops were given countywide twice a year over the 5-year period, and tailor-made workshops were given regularly in each school. In these workshops, the teachers were

[1] Fairfax County Public Schools is the 10th largest school district in the country, and has 120 elementary schools and 46 secondary schools.

FIGURE 3
OBJECTIVES FOR DEVELOPING SENTENCE STRUCTURE

KINDERGARTEN	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6
The student will: - dictate one or more sentences that describe pictures or objects	The student will: - write sentences in response to simple questions	The student will: - write sentences that describe events	The student will: - write sentences that describe persons	The student will: - combine short sentences to make longer, more effective ones - form compound subjects or compound predicates - join sentences	The student will: - expand basic sentences, adding information which tells when, what kind, how, where, etc.	The student will: - improve sentences by changing words and phrases - substitute exact words for general ones - substitute words with different connotations for particular words - rearrange words to achieve variety

Fairfax County Public Schools, Primary Program of Studies, K-3, 1979

Fairfax County Public Schools, Elementary Program of Studies, 4-6, 1978

GRADE 7	GRADE 8	GRADE 9	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12	
The student will: - vary sentence structure with emphasis on - constructing imperative, exclamatory, and interrogative sentences - using coordinating conjunctions effectively - combining short, choppy sentences	The student will: - vary sentence structure with emphasis on - varying beginnings - inverting subject-predicate order	The student will: - vary sentence structure with emphasis on - coordinating ideas with transitional words and phrases - using dependent and independent clauses	The student will: - vary sentence structure with emphasis on - subordinating ideas with transitional words and phrases - using adjective, adverb, and noun clauses	The student will: - vary sentence structure with emphasis on - using cumulative sentences - using inverted syntax	The student will: - vary sentence structure with emphasis on - controlling pace and rhythm through sentence flow - using periodic sentences	

Fairfax County Public Schools, English Language Arts Program of Studies, Levels 7-12, Revised 1981

FIGURE 4
OBJECTIVES FOR DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS

KINDERGARTEN	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6
The student will: Describe a personal experience, with teacher guidance, relating the important events and their sequence.	The student will: Demonstrate discussion skills by: -Listening attentively to others. -Taking turns giving ideas. -Keeping to the topic when speaking.	The student will: Participate in small group discussions to complete a given task within a time limit.	The student will: Present a brief talk about a book or a hobby (use the suggested outlines in the adopted language texts).	The student will: Speak before a group: -Explain the topic and/or purpose of the presentation. -Present information in a concise, organized manner. -Use words appropriate to the situation. -Choose words which most accurately convey ideas or information. -Avoid the use of slang in formal presentations. -Speak distinctly and loudly enough to be heard. -Establish eye contact with the audience. -Demonstrate good posture, standing or sitting erect but at ease.	The student will: Present oral reports about topics: -Gather information about the topic from two or more sources. -Take brief notes of important information. -Organize information for presentation, using notes. -Introduce the topic and explain reasons for the presentation. -State clearly important ideas and details. -Provide an appropriate ending, such as a summary, a provocation question, or a conclusion drawn from the information.	The student will: Give accurate instructions for carrying out a particular task: -State the expected outcome of the task. -Tell the materials needed and the approximate time required. -Explain the steps in sequential order. -Summarize or review information presented and answer questions.
Fairfax County Public Schools, Primary Program of Studies, K-3, 1978					Fairfax County Public Schools, Elementary Program of Studies, 4-6, 1978	

GRADE 7	GRADE 8	GRADE 9	GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12
The student will: Demonstrate interpersonal communication skills by participating satisfactorily in small group discussions.	The student will: Apply evaluative criteria to oral presentations with emphasis on the following: -Communicate a main idea. -Organize ideas logically. -Speak in a clear and distinct manner. -Demonstrate good posture, gestures, and eye contact.	The student will: Participate in a formal panel discussion.	The student will: Expand formal speech experiences by participating in a debate.	The student will: Prepare and deliver a short, impromptu speech.	The student will: Prepare and deliver a short, extemporaneous speech on a book, play, movie, or television program.
				Fairfax County Public Schools, English Language Arts Program of Studies: 7-12, Review, 1981	

Figure 5
Forms of Writing
(Grades 2-6)

Children should experience a variety of expository, narrative, and poetic writing during the elementary grades. Teachers should introduce and teach specific forms at the grade levels indicated below, and students should continue practicing them in subsequent grades.

EXPOSITORY	Grade	NARRATIVE	Grade	POETIC	Grade
Personal Experience	2	**Plays**		**Poems**	
Letters		Script dialogue	3	Cinquain	3
Invitation	2	Dialogue of an episode	4	Rhymed verse	4
Friendly	2	Script for skit	6	Concrete	3
Thank-you	4	**Stories**		Patterned	4
Social note	5	Simple story	2	Acrostic	4
Business	5	Fable	4	Haiku	5
Envelopes Addressed	2	Myth	4	Limerick	5
Reports		Tall tale	5	Diamante	6
Chronological report	2	Folk tale	5	Free verse	6
Simple report	3	Adventure	5		
Short report on given topic	4	Fantasy	5		
Notes	4	Legend	6		
Bibliography	4	Heroic adventure	6		
Diary	4	Mystery	6		
Journal	4	Science fiction	6		
Book report		Personal experience	6		
News report	5				
Outline	5				
Biography	5				
Autobiography	6				
Feature article	6				
Interviews	6				
Applications and similar forms	6				
Directions					
Two-step directions	2				
Location directions	5				
Commercials					
Commercial for radio or television	5				
Slogan or jingle	5				
Paragraphs					
Explanatory	3				
Ending for a story	3				
Descriptive	4				
Sequential	4				
Anecdotal	5				
Persuasive (advertisement)	6				

Beginning in kindergarten and grade one, students dictate sentences and simple stories to be written down by someone else. In grade one, students experience group writing of simple stories and copy class-written letters.

Figure 6

Writing Forms For English 7 - 12

English 7 The student will write:	English 8 The student will write:	English 9 The student will write:	English 10 The student will write:	English 11 The student will write:	English 12 The student will write:
complete sentences	one paragraph answers that restate the question as a topic sentence	paragraph that responds to a question	multi-paragraph answers that respond to the components of the questions	essay answers that restate the question as a thesis statement and develop the thesis	essay answers that restate the question as a thesis statement and develop the thesis
unified coherent paragraphs	unified coherent paragraphs	multi-paragraph compositions based on controlling purpose statements —personal essay —character analysis	multi-paragraph compositions —essay supporting a thesis statement —short report using and documenting at least one source	multi-paragraph compositions for a variety of purposes —persuasive essay —documented essay or evidence paper	a variety of essays —argumentative essay —critical analysis
a social note or a friendly letter	a business letter to request information	a business letter to —place an order —register a complaint	a letter to the editor	a letter of application for a job; an autobiographical essay for a job/college application	a personal resumé with cover letter
notes recorded from textual material and from oral or visual presentations	notes recorded from class discussions and reports	note cards recorded from secondary sources	notes recorded from a formal lecture	note cards recorded from primary sources	notes recorded by a variety of techniques appropriate to subject and source
reviews of books, films or other art forms	summaries of stories, films, or other materials	annotations of books, and television programs	a paraphrase of a poem	a précis	explications of poems

Fairfax County Public Schools, *Guidelines for Teaching Writing*, 1982

Figure 6 (continued)

Writing Forms For English 7 - 12

English 7 The student will write:	English 8 The student will write:	English 9 The student will write:	English 10 The student will write:	English 11 The student will write:	English 12 The student will write:
a brief news article	a news article	a newspaper feature article	an article based on an interview	a journalistic column/ commentary	an editorial for radio, television, or newspaper
poetry using short poetic forms	poetry using short poetic forms	poetry using selected forms	poetry using selected forms	free verse or other unrhymed verse	poems using traditional forms
a short dialogue personal narratives	a script for a skit an anecdote	an interior monologue (first person)	a short narrative a dramatic monologue (E)	a dramatic scene (E)	narrator relating experience from more than one point of view a socratic dialogue (E)
journal entries	journal entries a character sketch	notes or an outline for an oral report an advertisement (for print media	a commercial (for radio television		notes or an outline for a persuasive speech
a fable (E)		a vignette (E) a parody (E)	a multi-paragraph humorous essay (E) essays experimenting with such specific tones as satiric, humorous, ironic (E)		essays experimenting with an implicit rather than an explicit thesis (E)

Fairfax County Public Schools, *Guidelines for Teaching Writing*, 1982

engaged in activities in which they experienced, analyzed, and discussed the process of writing, the instructional objectives of the writing program, model writing assignments, methods for teaching writing, evaluation of writing, and management of the writing program.

Teacher/consultants

In addition to the inservice training guides, the school system in 1978 initiated the Northern Virginia Writing Project, a staff development program which is a part of the National Writing Project. The National Writing Project began in 1974 as the Bay Area Writing Project and provides a highly successful model for preparing teacher/consultants.

A cooperative venture between the public schools and the local university, the Northern Virginia Writing Project capitalizes on the strengths of master teachers, representing kindergarten through university levels, by preparing them to instruct other teachers how to teach writing better. Combining the best research on writing with the successful practices that they have used in their own classrooms, the Fairfax County teacher/consultants, during intensified summer institutes, prepare workshop presentations and practice the teacher/consultant roles that they will assume in their own schools and in other schools. During the institutes, these teacher/consultants study the research in the writing field extensively and prepare a formal 3-hour presentation on an area of study identified as essential to improved writing.

The teacher/consultants also learn to improve their own writing by sharing and discussing their written work with small writing groups. As emerging writers, themselves, teacher/consultants write to discover ideas, clarify thinking, and express feelings; they write to record the information that they are learning and to reflect on their own growth as writers. They discover not only their own writing strengths, but also the fundamental function of writing as a strategy for learning.

After the institute, teacher/consultants receive continuing education in regularly scheduled meetings in which they share common concerns, explore new ideas, learn from national consultants, and develop new workshops. Their educational experiences are also extended through local as well as national newsletters, and through a specialized university course that is designed to help them become researchers in their own classrooms.

These teacher/consultants, who range from kindergarten teachers to 12th grade teachers, serve as the core personnel for staff development and for inservice writing programs in the school system. In turn, they assist their own school staff with onsite inservice education programs, providing leadership in implementing the school's writing plan by initiating writing labs, schoolwide student writing conferences and contests, across-discipline workshops, and onsite university courses.

Assessment plan

In addition to an effective staff development program and a carefully articulated curriculum guide, a cooperative teacher-administrator assessment plan has provided the continuing dimension for the inservice education plan

on improving writing in the Fairfax County Public Schools. Working cooperatively with teachers, the principal of each secondary school has used the following questions as a guide for evaluating the writing program:

- **Is provision made in the English program for all aspects of the writing process?**
  - — Is there frequent writing in class?
  - — Is stress placed on the importance of generating and recording ideas?
  - — Are students taught to organize and refine as they develop ideas?
  - — Do students participate in an editing process by proofreading and revising?
- **Do writing assignments provide for the needs of all students?**
  - — Do assignments provide for the different abilities of students?
  - — Do assignments provide for the different backgrounds and interests of students?
  - — Are different types of writing assignments given?
- **Is writing evaluated consistently?**
  - — Does the evaluative instrument reflect the specific elements stressed in each assignment?
  - — Do students have a criteria checklist by which their writing will be judged?
  - — Do students have individual folders containing compositions that reflect their growth in composition?
- **Is there a system for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the school program?**
  - — Is there pretesting and posttesting of writing samples?
  - — Are the results of the assessment used in determining whether objectives have been met?
  - — Are the results of the assessment used in preparing objectives for the following year?
  - — Are the recommended procedures used to assess the progress and needs of particular groups of students?

By the end of every grading period, English department chairs have collected sample papers from students in each class. Teachers and the principal analyze these papers to determine overall program strengths and weaknesses. As a team, teachers at each grade level then make appropriate changes in their programs to facilitate student improvement in writing.

Assessing the total school writing program has been accomplished in both elementary and secondary schools by comparing student papers written at the beginning and at the end of the school year. Using a general impression or holistic approach, three teachers in the spring quickly read both sets of papers (coded to conceal student names and dates), ranking each paper from one to four. The papers are then uncoded to determine how many students improved, and how much they improved between the fall and the spring.

In-school review of writing in Fairfax schools has been augumented by visiting teams of English teachers and administrators who evaluate the English program in a week-long program audit. These teams confer with and observe teachers in classrooms, study lesson plans, inerview students, review student work on file in folders, meet the principals and resource people, and report to teachers and principals their recommendations and suggestions. Principals, working cooperatively with the teachers, follow up with concrete plans for program improvement. These plans are reviewed by the area superintendent who provides the necessary resources for implementation.

The success of the writing program in Fairfax can be attributed to the 5-year inservice education plan that encompasses the dimensions necessary for educational change: a carefully planned curriculum, a long range staff development program, and a built-in assessment system. Supported by the necessary personnel and materials resources and systemwide commitment, the goals of the writing program are being achieved.

HOW? DETERMINING SUCCESS

The success of any inservice plan on oral and written communication can best be measured by positive teacher performance, and measurable student growth in skill and knowledge. Teachers should gain confidence in their own competence in both speaking and writing. Classrooms should be vital and alive with opportunities for oral and written interaction. The teacher's love of language should be evident and contagious.

Multiple measures should be used to collect both formative and summative data on the success of inservice on oral and written communication. Structured activities may include written evaluations such as comments, checklists, rating scales; attitudinal surveys; recorded oral responses shared in groups; observations of classroom performance; self-checks on classroom applications; and measurements of student attitude and performance. Parent perceptions of the program may also be a part of the evaluation.

Student improvement should be measured by tests that promote learning and measure student performance of tasks in oral and written communication for real audiences and real purposes. Such tests should match the stated goals of the program.

Students' oral and written work should be evaluated on the basis of a knowledge of child growth and development and not on the extent to which it approximates adult performance. Elementary students should not be expected to use adult vocabulary and adult standards, but rather to use language in a way that is natural to them and clearly expesses their intended meaning (Fairfax County Public Schools, 1979).

Success in the program is realized when students speak and write with clarity, imagination, and confidence. When students believe that they can speak and write effectively and when they value their best efforts, they will become effective communicators.

Even though communities change, knowledge explodes, and technology races ahead, teachers will confidently take up the challenge of these demands when they are provided with the enriched experiences of effective inservice education. By expanding learning about oral and written communication, schools are responding to a vital need in today's changing world. At the same time, schools are refining their greatest resource—the teacher.

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